

Remarks

Reconsideration and reexamination of the above-identified patent application, as amended, are respectfully requested. Claims 1, and 4-6 are pending in this application upon entry of this Amendment. In this Amendment, the Applicant has amended claims 1 and 4. No claims have been cancelled or added by this Amendment. Of the pending claims, claims 1 and 4 are the only independent claims.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Final Office Action dated January 12, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 5, and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent no. 5,433,472 to Green et al. (hereinafter Green). The Applicant believes that the claimed invention is patentable over Green and has amended independent claims 1 and 4 to more clearly define thereover.

1. The Claimed Invention

The claimed invention, as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 4 is directed to an occupant protection system including an air bag having a skin including a closure portion. The closure portion provides the sole closure of an instrument panel opening and is directly exposed to an occupant compartment of the vehicle when the air bag is deflated. The closure portion of the air bag moves outwardly from the instrument panel opening as the air bag is deployed.

The Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 4 to more particularly claim that the closure portion provides the sole closure of the instrument panel opening and is directly exposed to an occupant compartment of the vehicle when the air bag is deflated.

Support for the amendment can be found, for example, in FIGS 1 and 2, and in the specification at pg. 3, ll. 21-28, and at pg. 5, ll. 14-17.

2. The Claimed Invention Compared to Green

The claimed invention differs from Green in that the claimed invention includes an air bag having a skin including a closure portion wherein the closure portion provides the sole closure of the instrument panel opening and is directly exposed to an occupant compartment of the vehicle when the air bag is deflated. In contrast, Green generally discloses a device for securing a passenger-side inflator to a module housing without the use of fasteners or special tools (Green, Abstract). The module 40 comprises a module cover 42, an air bag cushion 44, an inflator 46, and a canister 48 (Green, col. 3, ll. 55-57). The module cover 42 encloses the air bag cushion 44 within the canister 48 (Green, FIG. 4, col. 3, ll. 55-57, col. 5, ll. 3-4). As such, Green does not teach or suggest all the elements of the claimed invention.

Accordingly, the Applicant believes that amended independent claims 1 and 4 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Green. Claims 5 and 6 depend from amended independent claims 1 and 4, respectively, and include the limitations therein. Moreover, these claims recite further limitations, in addition to the limitations of amended independent claims 1 and 4, which render these claims additionally patentable. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection to claims 1, and 4-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

CONCLUSION

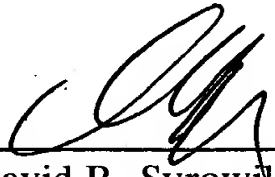
In summary, claim 1, 4, 5, and 6, as amended, meet the substantive requirements for patentability. The case is in appropriate condition for allowance. Accordingly, such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone or video conference would expedite allowance or resolve any further questions, such a conference is invited at the convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: MARCH 30, 2005

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